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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 GABORONE 000457

SIPDIS

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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [EAID](#) [KPKO](#) [SADC](#) [BC](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH SADC DIRECTOR FOR PEACE
AND SECURITY

REF: A. STATE 57332

[B](#). GABORONE 209

[C](#). STATE 18852

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen J. Nolan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: As part of post's ongoing efforts to increase engagement with SADC, Ambassador met with Lt. Gen. (rtd.) Tanki Mothae, the Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security, at the SADC headquarters in Gaborone on June 8, [1](#)2009. The Ambassador reiterated our request that U.S. military observers be allowed to take part in the upcoming SADC military exercise "Golfhino" to be held in South Africa in September. He also explained to Mothae that the USG is interested in deepening its ties with SADC, including on peace and security matters. The Ambassador briefed Mothae about ways in which the USG is already engaging with most SADC members states on both civilian and military security matters, including ILEA and ACOTA. Mothae was gracious and open during the 90-minute meeting, and he pledged to improve communication between Embassy Gaborone and the SADC Secretariat. Though he will need to get back to us with detailed answers on the questions regarding implementation of the Presidential Directive on U.S. Security Cooperation with SADC, Mothae did agree verbally that U.S. observers would be welcome at the Golfhino exercise. END SUMMARY.

Background

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador Nolan sent a letter to Southern African Development Committee (SADC) Executive Secretary June 5 regarding U.S.- SADC military cooperation, and followed up the same day with a phone call to Salomao. During their telephone conversation, the Ambassador reminded Salomao that the USG has been trying to follow up with SADC regarding information needed to start the process of implementing the January 2009 Presidential Determination (PD), but that staff from the Organ on Defence, Politics, and Security have been unresponsive to our inquiries. Dr. Salomao promised to raise the issue immediately with Lieutenant General (retired) Tanki Mothae, the Organ's Director. Apparently Salomao's instruction to Mothae worked, because Mothae phoned the Ambassador around close of business Friday June 5 and set up a meeting with the Ambassador and Pol/Econ Chief for Monday June 8.

(C) Organ Director: Open but Overwhelmed?

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador and Pol/Econ Chief met with Lt. Gen. Mothae

in his office at the SADC headquarters for approximately 90 minutes on June 8. Mothae scrambled to find a staff member to sit in on the meeting, and Ms. Linda Ramokate, the Politics and Diplomacy Officer, joined the meeting a few minutes late. Mothae has been in his position since December 2006. He informed us that he is a retired officer of the Lesotho Defence Force and that he has been to the United States twice for military training (Fort Meade for Public Affairs training and Fort Bragg for Psy Ops and Civil Affairs training, years unspecified). He apologized for the difficulty in contacting him sooner, but explained that his staff is quite small (he would never specify how many) and their responsibilities are quite broad. He also noted that he travels frequently, previously often to Harare and more recently to Madagascar due to the crisis. He also spends time in Swaziland, the current Chair of the Organ Troika. According to Mothae, his section of SADC is responsible for four main sectors: politics and diplomacy; defense; state security; and public security (which includes diverse areas like customs, corrections, wildlife, and refugees). He also said that his section will soon be responsible for police issues within SADC.

14. (C) The Ambassador opened the meeting by briefing Mothae on the USG request to send military observers to the upcoming Golfhino exercise and our desire for deeper peace and security cooperation with SADC. He gave Lt. Gen. Mothae several copies of the Presidential Determination as well as the questions that we would like SADC to answer to begin the process of a Section 505 agreement needed to implement the PD (ref A and previous). Mothae thanked the Ambassador for his

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visit and said he had wanted to be in touch with the U.S. Embassy on peace and security matters "for a long time." He explained that some of his major challenges at present are working on a common SADC visa (akin to the Schengen visa for EU countries), launching the SADC Brigade as part of the African Union's Stand-by Force, elections this year in a number of member states, working on a SADC "Early Warning System" information network, ongoing unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and of course the crises in Zimbabwe and more recently Madagascar. The Ambassador briefed Mothae about the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana, and noted that SADC should get to know the facility and its programs as most member states are taking part. He also told Mothae about the U.S. ACOTA program and the role that ACOTA has played in peacekeeping training for various African militaries. Mothae was eager to visit ILEA in future and interested in the ACOTA concept.

Madagascar

15. (C) Lt. Gen. Mothae was quite concerned about Madagascar's future. He said that although SADC suspended the nation after its coup, that the regional body must ensure that Madagascar is restored to membership soon, under proper governance. The Ambassador praised SADC's firm stance against the coup in Madagascar and noted that the USG is in contact with the UN, AU, and of course SADC to try to help resolve the political crisis. He explained that the U.S. supports early elections for the island, perhaps by the end of 2009. Mothae agreed that new elections would be key, and he said that he had no faith that the HAT could oversee new elections or a democratic transition. He told us that a representative from his staff at the secretariat is in Madagascar "all the time" (though the staff members rotate in this duty) and that there are also SADC representatives in Antananarivo from each of the SADC troika member states (usually from their Foreign Affairs or Defense ministries). According to Mothae, the SADC Representative in Madagascar returned from the island last week and has briefed the SADC Chairman as well as the Organ Troika members and the Secretariat staff. Mothae explained that he has not yet had a chance to discuss the latest news with Executive Secretary

Salomao or to decide on a way ahead for SADC before a summit is called. The real issue, Mothae said, is how to encourage early elections. He explained that Madagascar in his view "has no real electoral law" and desperately needs security sector reform.

The Way Ahead

¶6. (C) At the close of the meeting, Lt. Gen. Mothae told the Ambassador that he has approved our request to send U.S. military observers to the Golfhino exercise. (Note: We hope to soon receive a formal written reply agreeing to our written request to send observers to Golfhino. End note.) He also promised to meet with us again "soon" to discuss what kind of security assistance SADC might need and talk about the questions we need answered before moving forward with greater defense cooperation. However, Mothae also noted that he will be in Swaziland from June 19 to the end of the month, and then at the African Union in early July, and wrapped up with organizing the annual SADC summit in August. He stressed however that he believes SADC needs urgent support on democracy and good governance, including training election observers and a civilian component for its upcoming exercise and broader Stand-by Force mandate, and finally he hoped to work with SADC's "International Cooperating Partners" to establish SADC expertise on mediation and conflict prevention.

A Small Step Forward...

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Embassy Officers have been pursuing a meeting with Mothae or one of his subordinates for at least 4 months, but our letters, calls and emails went unanswered. This 90-minute meeting with Mothae, though not groundbreaking in content, represents a step forward in establishing a more regular and productive dialogue with the SADC secretariat, particularly on vital peace and security matters. We are

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hopeful that the right office at SADC has finally gotten the full message about our Presidential Determination and the information needed by the Department to proceed with it. However, the ball remains in SADC's court to provide written responses to the questions as outlined in Ref A. SADC's Directorate for Politics, Defense, and Security is clearly small and overwhelmed by dealing with regional political crises and organizing meetings on a whole host of security topics, ranging from customs, to peacekeeping, to human trafficking. Despite their open attitudes during our meeting, they may be stretched too thin to provide the level of information we want in timely fashion. Post will continue to follow up and try to keep the issue of defense cooperation with the USG high on their radar screens. END COMMENT.

NOLAN